



## Health organisations applaud the European Parliament’s stand against tobacco industry agreements

**Brussels, 10 March 2016:** Yesterday the European Parliament adopted a Resolution stating, in no uncertain terms, that the European Commission should not renew, extend or renegotiate the Agreement with Phillips Morris International (PMI) beyond its current date of expiry in July 2016.

The resolution was adopted by a strong majority of 414 votes in favour, 214 against, and 66 abstentions. The paragraph explicitly calling on the Commission to reject any extensions garnered an even stronger majority of **432 votes**.

Whether to renew the PMI agreement is currently under active consideration by the European Commission and a decision is due shortly, so the resolution is timely.

The Smoke Free Partnership (SFP) together with more than 30 public health organisations across Europe urge the European Commission to respect the strong political message sent by this resolution. We call on the Commission to focus its efforts on promoting the ratification and implementation of the WHO FCTC Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products as well as the implementation of the Tobacco Products Directive – both appropriate tools to combat illicit trade in tobacco. **Any further move towards a renewal of tobacco industry agreements risks damaging the EU’s global reputation among governments struggling to combat illicit tobacco trade.**

Florence Berteletti, Director of the Smoke Free Partnership said: *“Today, MEPs said it loud and clear: public health of European citizens is not negotiable and we cannot entrust it to the tobacco industry. We hope that the European Commission will listen to the European Parliament’s decision and say NO to any possible extension. There are better means available to fight illicit trade: the Tobacco Products Directive and the WHO FCTC Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. Instead of weakening them through industry agreements, the EU should focus its political efforts and resources towards implementing these tools.”*

The Smoke Free Partnership and health organisations in Europe remain strongly committed to promoting effective measures for combating the illicit tobacco trade.

**Note to editors:**

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***The SFP Coalition is a specialised network of more than 25 independent EU and national organisations with technical expertise in tobacco control policy created in 2014. Led by SFP, Coalition partners work together to promote and support smoking prevention through the development of advocacy strategies that***

*deliver specific EU tobacco control policies as well as to promote and support smoking prevention at international, European and national level through the development and implementation of the FCTC, its protocols and guidelines.*

**EPHA is a change agent – Europe’s leading NGO advocating for better health.** *We are a dynamic member-led organisation, made up of public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals, and disease groups working together to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe. EPHA is a member of, among others, the Social Platform, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), and the EU Civil Society Contact Group.*

**More information at:**

Factsheet on the PMI Agreement with the EU: <http://smokefreepartnership.eu/documents/factsheet-about-agreement-between-eu-and-philip-morris-international>

About the WHO FCTC Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products:  
<http://www.who.int/fctc/protocol/about/en/>